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ABSTRACT

A random sample of teachers (N=329) responded to a survey on how economic conditions were affecting teachers in Texas. Responses indicated that four out of ten teachers are seriously considering leaving the profession; three-fourths balk at recommending teaching as a career at a time of severe teacher shortages; and almost one-fourth of the teachers moonlight to supplement their salaries. Males are scarce at all levels, especially in the elementary schools. An analysis of the data shows that males and single teachers moonlight at twice the rate of females and married teachers. Teachers are dissatisfied with the career ladder, and the most common reason for leaving is now working conditions rather than salary as found in three previous studies. Two-thirds of the teachers support mandated negotiations with the local school board. The one bright spot in the study is the increase in teacher salaries. A sample questionnaire is included. (Author/JD)

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MOONLIGHTING, SALARY, AND MORALE: THE TEXAS TEACHERS' STORY

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ABSTRACT

The "Teacher Moonlighting" questionnaire has provided a base of data on Texas teachers since 1980. The study was inspired by the researchers belief that there had been a serious deterioration of morale among public school teachers and that an increasing number of these practicing teachers seemed to be experiencing financial difficulty forcing them to "moonlight" in order to meet their financial needs.

The investigators approached the Texas State Teachers Association with a continuing proposal to provide a random sample of their 100,000 teacher membership in order to understand how these economic conditions were affecting teachers in Texas.

Four of ten teachers are seriously considering leaving the profession; three-fourths balk at recommending teaching as a career at a time of severe teacher shortages; and almost one-fourth of the teachers moonlight to supplement their salaries. Males are scarce at all levels, especially at the elementary school. When analyzing the data, males and single teachers moonlight at twice the rate of females and married teachers.

Teachers are dissatisfied with the career ladder (83%) and the most common reason for leaving is now working conditions rather than salary as found in the three previous studies. Two-thirds of the teachers support mandated negotiations with the local school board. The one bright spot in the study is the increase in teacher salaries.

TEACHERS AND MOONLIGHTING

DIRECTIONS: Please circle or answer all items that apply to you.
Add comments if you wish.

1. What is your age?.....Years _____
2. Sex.....Male Female
3. Marital Status.....Married Single Other
4. If married, does your spouse work?.....Yes No NA
5. What is your highest degree?.....BA MEd PhD
6. Are you the major bread winner in your household?.....Yes No Equal
7. Do you favor mandated professional negotiation rights for teachers with local school districts? Yes No
8. Are you seriously considering leaving the teaching profession?.....Yes No
If yes, why are you considering leaving?.....
9. In what type of district do you teach?.....Urban Suburban Rural
10. What grade level do you primarily teach?.....K-5 6-8 9-12
11. How many years have you taught in the public schools?.....Years _____
12. What is your current teaching salary per year?.....\$ _____
13. Are you pleased with the current NO PASS/NO PLAY rule?.....Yes No
14. Are you satisfied with the current CAREER LADDER program?.....Yes No
15. Should career ladder provisions in the law be improved or eliminated?.....Improved Eliminated
16. Do you have an extra job during the summer?.....Yes No
17. How much extra do you earn during the summer?.....\$ _____ None
18. Do you have an extra (moonlighting) job during the regular school year to supplement your teaching salary?.....Yes No

If your answer to Question #18 is yes, please answer the following questions.

19. Do you feel that the quality of your teaching would improve if you did not have a second job during the regular school year?.....Yes No
20. How much extra money do you earn during the regular school year?.....\$ _____
21. How many hours per week during the regular school year do you spend working at the moonlighting job?....Hours _____
22. Would you quit the second job if your teaching salary would enable you to give up moonlighting during the school year?.....Yes No
23. How large a raise in your teaching salary would you have to get to enable you to give up moonlighting during the regular school year?.....\$ _____
24. What is your extra job during the school year? (Please give a job title such as bookkeeper, sales clerk, rancher, etc.).....

INTRODUCTION

Biannually since 1980, the researchers have conducted a state-wide survey of Texas teachers with the Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA) providing mailing materials. The 1986 survey was conducted in March when questionnaires were mailed to 525 teachers selected from a systematic sample of the 100,000 TSTA members. The current study had a return rate of 65 percent (329 of 510 returns). Fifteen of the questionnaires were returned because of bad addresses.

SURVEY OF LITERATURE

Numerous nation-wide studies have related to teacher morale, salaries, stress, and quitting the profession. Educational Research Service¹ reported that three-fourths of 1346 teachers surveyed balked at recommending the career to others. The teachers said they were more worried about excessive paperwork than low salaries. They reported an average salary of \$23,345 in 1985 and suggested a \$6000 increase. The most serious problem after paperwork and pay was a lack of involvement by parents. In gathering data for a dissertation at Texas A & M University, Barber² reported that stress among 67 elementary school teachers exceeded financial reward, paperwork, conflict with administrators, and fifteen other factors.

Louis Harris and Associates³ conducted the second annual "Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher". The teachers said they felt underpaid (63%), thought merit pay could work (71%), and favored easier firing of incompetent teachers (85%). Amid predictions of a massive

teacher shortage, a quarter of the teachers said low pay and poor conditions are likely to drive them from the classroom within five years. The study added weight to recent federal studies that have predicted the nation will have 34 percent fewer teachers than it needs by 1992. The National Education Association⁴ reported the the percentage of teachers who indicated they would not teach again had increased from 10 percent in 1960 to 36 percent in 1980. A similar feeling was found at the college level in a Carnegie Foundation⁵ survey of 5000 professors. Thirty-eight percent of college teachers said they were thinking about leaving the profession within five years. Twenty-one percent said they would not choose teaching if they could start over.

Texas high school students planning to major in education rank among the lowest in the nation in math and verbal skills according to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching⁶. Texas students ranked 47th in math and verbal skills on the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Dean Corrigan, Dean of Education at Texas A & M University, said exit tests now required state-wide will keep unqualified teachers out of the classroom, but also indicated that a teacher shortage is inevitable unless brighter students can be drawn into the profession.

William Kirby⁷, Education Commissioner for Texas, told the State Board of Education that Texas now has 175,000 teachers but will be short 15,000 in September of 1986 because of classroom defections and the Texas Educators and Current Administrators Test (TECAT). The Texas State Teachers Association⁸ indicated that the \$24,419 average salary of a Texas teacher ranks 24th in 1985-86 compared to a national mean of \$25,257. The state ranks 27th in expenditure per pupil at \$3384 per ADA.

Bynum⁹, the former Commissioner of Education in Texas said, "...if the frustration level remains high, if we don't see an easing of the pressures, the demands and difficulties caused by reforms during the next school year, then I think we probably will see a pretty good fallout, a significant number of people leaving the profession."

An exodus of young, talented but dissatisfied teachers from the nation's classrooms is becoming a catastrophe for education in the United States. The Metropolitan Life Survey¹⁰ indicated skimpy pay, bad working conditions, and lack of respect and prestige are causing teachers to switch to more satisfying and profitable careers. The majority leaving were male teachers in high schools.

The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy¹¹ recommends a professional degree and teaching certificate granted by a National Board of Professional Standards to those passing stiff tests. Licenses to teach could be obtained from states but the board-certified teacher would have extra pay and prestige akin to the board certification of physicians. It recommends that these top teachers be paid up \$45,000 to \$65,000 for 12 months with a regular certified teacher making \$21,000 to \$35,000 for ten months.

The report states, "If our standard of living is not to fall steadily in the years ahead, if the underclass is not to continue its steady growth, if our democracy is to function effectively into the next century, our schools must graduate the vast majority of their students with achievement levels long thought possible for only the privileged few. Everything depends on the teachers...."

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Table 1 shows teacher characteristics for the years 1980-1986. The average salary was up 21 percent from 1984 but still less than the national mean of \$ 25,257. The average age stayed about the same at 41 years of age. There was an increase in the number of male teachers (18.2%) and the percent of married teachers (2.8%). Spouses working increased eight percent and the number of Master's degrees increased almost eleven percent yet the teacher as major breadwinner was down slightly. There was a small growth in the number of teachers in urban schools and about an eight percent increase in the number of teachers in elementary schools due to the baby boom. The years of teaching experience was up from 13.7 years to 14.3 years. The number of teachers considering leaving has steadily increased for the last four years (4.8% this year). Summer jobs (-7%), moonlighting jobs (-14%), extra money earned in summer (-14%), and moonlighting (-3%) are all down in 1986.

Teachers are equally split on their feeling toward the No Pass/No Play Rule. However, five out of six Texas teachers are dissatisfied with the career ladder and two-thirds favor mandated professional negotiations with the local school district. There was an even split on whether to improve or eliminate the career ladder provisions.

The reasons for leaving the profession (Table 2) are down drastically from 41 percent to 17 percent because of salary. Consistent with other studies, quitting because of working conditions (stress, paper work, and hassles) more than doubled from 31 percent to 68 percent from 1984 to 1986. The second job that teachers work continues to be menial and primarily in the area of sales or school related (Table 3).

CONCLUSIONS

The researchers can only echo the findings of the past six years. Since 1980 the investigators have stated that there is a crisis in education in Texas. Four in ten teachers are seriously considering leaving the profession; three-fourths balk at recommending teaching as a career at a time of severe teacher shortages; and almost one-fourth of the teachers moonlight to supplement their salaries. Males are scarce at all levels, especially at the elementary school. When analyzing the data, males and single teachers moonlight at twice the rates of females and married teachers.

Teachers are dissatisfied with the career ladder (83%) and the most common reason for leaving is now working conditions rather than salary as found in the three previous studies. Two-thirds of the teachers support mandated negotiations with the local school board. The one bright spot in the study is the increase in teacher salaries. The trend upward in salaries must be supplemented by reduction in stress and support for teachers from parents.

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Table 1

SURVEY OF TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS

Characteristics	1980	1982	1984	1986
Average Salary	\$14,113	\$17,351	\$20,259	\$24,601
Average Age	38.6	39.2	41.2	41.3
Sex: Male	19.9%	19.7%	14.8%	17.5%
Female	80.1%	80.3%	85.2%	82.5%
Married	76.6%	74.9%	75.3%	77.4%
Spouse Works	70.1%	69.6%	66.3%	71.8%
Degree: BA	63.9%	62.5%	55.4%	50.3%
MEd	35.7%	37.2%	44.0%	48.7%
PhD	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%	1.0%
Major Breadwinner	39.9%	39.8%	39.5%	38.5%
Districts: Urban	40.5%	43.3%	42.8%	46.2%
Suburban	32.6%	36.7%	38.9%	36.5%
Rural	26.8%	20.1%	18.4%	17.3%
Grade Taught: K-5	50.9%	49.8%	45.8%	51.5%
6-8	19.9%	19.7%	24.4%	22.9%
9-12	29.2%	30.4%	29.8%	25.6%
Years Experience	11.8	12.1	13.7	14.3
Consider Leaving	38.4%	37.3%	39.8%	41.7%
Extra Job In Summer	30.2%	36.4%	33.7%	31.2%
Summer Earnings	\$1252	\$2076	\$2205	\$1891
Moonlight	22.0%	28.8%	26.2%	22.6%
Hours Weekly	13.6	11.9	14.4	12.8
Earnings	\$2799	\$3189	\$3615	\$3522
Detrimental	64.1%	68.5%	70.1%	50.1%
Quit Moonlighting	75.0%	75.0%	81.6%	60.9%

New Questions:

- a) Are you pleased with the current NO PASS/NO PLAY rule?
Yes (54.5%) No (44.6%) No Opinion (0.4%)
- b) Are you satisfied with the current CAREER LADDER program?
Yes (14.3%) No (83.2%) No Opinion (2.5%)
- c) Do you favor mandated professional negotiation rights for teachers with local school districts? **Yes (68.2%) No (23.1%) No Opinion (8.7%)**
- d) Should career ladder provisions in the law be improved or eliminated?
Improved (49.4%) Eliminated (46.5%) No Opinion (4.1%)

Table 2

REASONS FOR LEAVING

Reason	1980	1982	1984	1986
Money	46%	50%	41%	17%
Working Conditions	27%	24%	31%	68%
•Stress				
•Burnout				
•Paperwork				
•Hassles				
Students	14%	13%	4%	3%
•Discipline				
•Motivation				
•Academics				
Retiring	5%	6%	14%	12%
Industry	3%	4%	6%	0%
Others	5%	3%	6%	0%

1980 Number Leaving (106); Comments (140); 219 of 417 Returns (70%)

1982 Number Leaving (119); Comments (140); 319 of 495 Returns (65%)

1984 Number Leaving (132); Comments (138); 332 of 474 Returns (70%)

1986 Number Leaving (137); Comments (133); 329 of 510 Returns (65%)

HB72 was mentioned eight times and TECAT was mentioned ten times.

There were 525 questionnaires mailed with 10 returned from bad addresses. The initial return rate was 46% and the follow-up rate was 19%.

Table 3**MOONLIGHTING JOBS FOR TEACHERS**

JOB TITLE	1980	1982	1984	1986
School Related	37%	42%	34%	24%
Services	19%	22%	28%	6%
Sales	22%	21%	19%	35%
Agriculture	5%	8%	6%	1%
Bookkeeping	5%	4%	6%	9%
Music Related	6%	3%	5%	15%
Artistic	3%	0%	3%	0%
No Comment	3%	0%	0%	10%
Total Number	64	78	101	71

Teacher Comments on the Moonlighting Questionnaire

1. I'm from a third generation teaching family with a total of 130 years teaching experience.
2. How could I moonlight? I have too much paper work.
3. Education in Texas sucks! I don't give a damn if these little Texans never play sports--I want them to know how to read. My Master's degree isn't worth the paper it's written on. I work for peanuts, and three months after receiving my Master's, I have to requalify for a lifetime teaching certificate.
4. If I were a single parent, I would have to have a second job!
5. I'm a very creative teacher and I work myself to death!
6. I feel that the career ladder has done more damage to the teaching profession than can be realized. It is very demoralizing, demeaning, and discouraging the way the career ladder is handled.
7. It pleases me that academic excellence is put first but I feel that the punishment should fit the crime and in this case it does not.
8. I do not believe that it is possible for me to be the competent teacher that I desire and have another job.
9. Career ladder causes too much friction between teachers. On the No pass/No Play, six weeks off is too long; should be three weeks. Teachers with 10 years experience should not be tested.
10. Career ladder cannot be fair. I'd like to see No Pass/No Play only in required courses.
11. Fortunately my husband is not a teacher and I help him in his business.
12. Final selection on career ladder is nit picking.
13. HB 72 is the primary reason I want out of education. The paper work keeps trickling down. All the good teachers I know want out. HB 72 has become a very poor, expensive joke on the people of Texas.
14. I moonlight to combat frustration with teaching.
15. I have taught in four districts under six principals and realize that many people are not evaluated fairly.
16. Teaching is no longer an honorable profession. I am ashamed to tell anyone I teach.
17. I support No Pass/No Play to the extent it puts academics first. I disagree with the section that removes a student from extra curricular activities for an entire grading period.
18. I retired early because of frustration and disillusionment. I favor testing teachers and administrators before certification.
19. I love working with E.D. students. Expectations from the higher ups are getting to me. The stress, motivation level, and morale have been a real burden this year. It's taken away from the reason I went into Education -- the children.
20. I do not believe it's possible for me to be the competent teacher that I desire to be and have another job. However, I will soon have a son in college and will be forced to work in the summer.
21. Those in resource classes have the best chance of staying eligible for extra-curricular activities. I don't feel No Pass/No Play will motivate those who need it most.

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